



Media Contact: Anita Bennett or Carmen Carlisle
c/o Young Communications Group, Inc.
213.738.9240, ext. 202 or ext. 201; cell: 213.304.2463
abennett@youngcomms.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The California African American Museum History Council Presents An Inside Look at Integrating The Los Angeles Fire Department in The Early 1940's

Los Angeles—March 6, 2009—At 90, Arnett Hartsfield still carries the nickname, “The Rookie,” although he is accomplished in many fields. As featured speaker at the Saturday, March 14 Conversations@CAAM (California African American Museum), Hartsfield will share his experiences as a rookie with the Los Angeles Fire Department, as well as other salient points of his illustrious life. In 1940, when he became the first African American firefighter in Los Angeles, he was a rookie who battled more than fires. As a pioneer in desegregation of the Los Angeles Fire Department, he faced blatant discrimination that led to his becoming an attorney. He helped found the African American Firefighter Museum in 1947 and authored a book with former city councilman Billy Mills on the history of the integration of the fire department. He then became a professor of Black History. Hartsfield is still an active member of the board of the African American Firefighter Museum, which is located inside Station 30, one of two black fire stations in Los Angeles during the 1940's and 1950's.

Robert Lee Johnson, chairman of the Project's Committee of the CAAM History Council, will interview Harfield. Johnson was co-coordinator of the Compton branch of the Black Panther Party in the 1970's and a founding member of the Coalition Against Police Abuse. As a political commentator, he has been a frequent guest on the “Marshall Gilbert Show.”

Sponsored by the CAAM History Council every other month, Conversations@CAAM is a series that presents issues, insights and experiences of individuals who impact the community and have compelling stories to tell. The event is open to the public and free of charge, however, guests are encouraged to make reservations at 213.744.2056. The museum is located in Exposition Park at 600 State Drive. Parking in the adjacent lot at 39th and Figueroa Sts. is \$8.00 all day.

CAAM researches, collects, preserves and interprets for public enrichment the history, art and culture of African Americans. Chartered by the California State Legislature in 1977, CAAM is a state supported institution and a partner with the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization Friends, the Foundation of the California African American Museum. In addition to its permanent collection, CAAM hosts specially mounted exhibitions curated through loans and its own collection, and tours CAAM exhibitions throughout California and the nation. The museum is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm, and Sundays 11am-5pm. Admission is always free.

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